

REMARKS

At the outset, the Examiner is thanked for the thorough review and consideration of the pending application. The Office Action dated May 20, 2010, has been received and its contents carefully reviewed.

By this Amendment, claim 1, 2, 5, and 13 are amended, and claims 8 and 9 are canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Claims 3-4, 6-7, 11-12 and 14-19 were previously canceled. No claims are added. Accordingly, claims 1, 2, 5, 10, and 13 are currently pending. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims is respectfully requested.

The Office Action objects to claim 8. Claim 8 is now canceled rendering the obviation moot.

The Office Action rejects claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite. Claim 1 has been amended to obviate the rejection.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-2, 5, 8-10, and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Publication No. DE 196 50 861 to Sassone (hereinafter "Sassone") in view of Publication No. DE 37 28 608 to Riller et al. (hereinafter "Riller"). *Office Action* at p. 3. Claims 8 and 9 are now canceled and thus, the rejection with respect to these claims are now moot. As to the remaining claims, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 recites an aqua stopping device for a washing device, comprising a hollow valve body including a passage formed within; a plurality of valves for opening and closing the passage, wherein the plurality of valves are enclosed in the hollow valve body; signal wires connected to terminals of the valves; an inner case enclosed by the hollow valve body, a wall of the inner case separating an interior of the inner case from the plurality of valves enclosed in the hollow valve body; a portion of a connecting wire intruding into the hollow valve body and connected to the signal wires at the interior of the inner case; and a filler fills an area where the connecting wire connects with the signal wires at the interior of the inner case.

In rejecting claim 1, the Office Action relies on Fig. 4 of Sassone. In particular, the Office Action asserts that a connecting portion (near 37) is provided at a portion connecting the signal wire (electrical cable 21A) to the connecting wire (terminal ends 37)-where the wires are

connected, Fig. 4. A “filler” (coat body 30) encloses the connecting portion. See Office Action at page 4.

However, as shown in Fig. 4 of Sassone, the valve housing 2A is not a hollow valve body as recited in claim 1. Further, claim 1 requires that the connecting wire is connected to the signal wires at the interior of the inner case. The inner case is enclosed by the hollow valve body, and a wall of the inner case separates the interior of the inner case from the plurality of valves enclosed in the hollow valve body. Fig. 4 of Sassone nowhere discloses or suggest the above noted features of claim 1. The Office Action acknowledges this at page 4 when it states that Sassone does not teach that an empty outer case and the filler and that the “inner case” is positioned the filler.

However, the Office Action asserts that Riller compensates for deficiencies of Sassone. Applicants respectfully disagree.

The Office Action asserts that Riller teaches outer case which surrounds the inner case and is connected to the inner case, Fig.2. If Applicants were to accept the Office Action’s assertions, then in Riller, the valves are enclosed in the inner case. See Fig. 2 of Riller.

In contrast, claim 1 recites the inner case is enclosed by the hollow valve body, and the wall of the inner case separates the interior of the inner case from the plurality of valves enclosed in the hollow valve body. In Riller, it is just the opposite, that is, the inner case encloses the valves.

Isolating the plurality of valves from the interior of the inner case where the connecting wire connects to the signal wires, and at the interior of the inner case the connecting portion in an inner casing and using a filler to fill an area where the connecting wire connects with the signal wires at the interior of the inner case provide many benefits and advantages such as isolating from valves that may potentially leak water. As paragraph [32] of the specification reveals, water coming in contact with where the connecting wire connects to the signal wires may cause current leakage.

For at least the reasons as discussed above, claim 1 is allowable over Sassone in view of Riller.

Claims 2, 5, 10, and 13 are at least patentable by virtue of their dependency from claim 1.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-2, 5, 8-10, and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over EP Patent Publication No. EP0293931 to Gumm et al., (hereinafter “Gumm”) in view of Sassone. *Office Action* at p. 5. Claims 8 and 9 are now canceled and thus, the rejection with respect to these claims are now moot. As to the remaining claims, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 recites an aqua stopping device for a washing device, comprising a hollow valve body including a passage formed within; a plurality of valves for opening and closing the passage, wherein the plurality of valves are enclosed in the hollow valve body; signal wires connected to terminals of the valves; an inner case enclosed by the hollow valve body, a wall of the inner case separating an interior of the inner case from the plurality of valves enclosed in the hollow valve body; a portion of a connecting wire intruding into the hollow valve body and connected to the signal wires at the interior of the inner case; and a filler fills an area where the connecting wire connects with the signal wires at the interior of the inner case.

Similar to the deficiency of Sassone, the Office Action acknowledges that Gumm does not disclose or suggest an inner case. However, The Office Action asserts that Applicants have not established any criticality to the feature. Applicants respectfully disagree.

As stated above, isolating the plurality of valves from the interior of the inner case where the connecting wire connects to the signal wires, and at the interior of the inner case the connecting portion in an inner casing and using a filler to fill an area where the connecting wire connects with the signal wires at the interior of the inner case provide many benefits and advantages such as isolating from valves that may potentially leak water. As paragraph [32] of the specification reveals, water coming in contact with where the connecting wire connects to the signal wires may cause current leakage.

Further, as set forth in paragraph [42], the assembly process that allows for only the interior of the inner case to be filled with filler, instead of the conventional filling of the entire interior of the outer case with filler, allows for the aqua stopping device to become lighter, and the amount of filler needed decreases, reducing manufacturing costs.

For at least the reasons as discussed above, claim 1 is allowable over Gumm in view of Sassone.

Claims 2, 5, 10, and 13 are at least patentable by virtue of their dependency from claim 1.

CONCLUSION

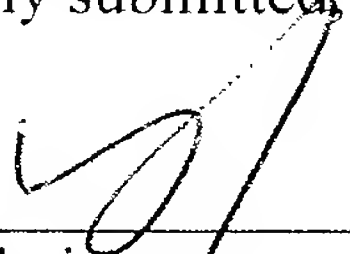
The application is in condition for allowance. Early, favorable action is respectfully solicited.

If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at (202) 496-7500 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance. All correspondence should continue to be sent to the below-listed address.

If these papers are not considered timely filed by the Patent and Trademark Office, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136, and any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 for any necessary extension of time, or any other fees required to complete the filing of this response, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0911. Please credit any overpayment to deposit Account No. 50-0911.

Respectfully submitted,

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